GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:788
ANSWERED ON:07.02.2017
Arsenic Contamination in Water
Misra Shri Ajay (Teni)

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the levels of arsenic contamination have reached alarming proportions in major rivers across the country including Ganga and Yamuna due to disposal of industrial waste and residual ashes from the coal based power plants;
(b) if so, whether the Government has conducted any study to examine the ill effects of high levels of arsenic contamination in water;
(c) if so, the details and findings thereof;
(d) whether arsenic adversely affects human brains, nervous system and pregnancy; and
(e) if so, the measures being taken by the Government to reduce the increasing levels of arsenic contamination in water?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ANIL MADHAV DAVE)

(a)to (d) As per information received from the Central Pollution Control Board which monitors the water quality of rivers Ganga and Yamuna, surface water of the two rivers does not indicate the presence of arsenic in aqueous phase. The studies carried out by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) in respect of ground water quality monitoring indicate that groundwater is contaminated with arsenic in parts of 153 districts in 21 States and UTs. Long-term exposure to arsenic in drinking water may cause several health implications.

(e) Remedial measures undertaken in arsenic contaminated areas include sharing of ground water quality analysis data by the CGWB with concerned State agencies for awareness and necessary action; exploratory drilling carried out for tapping contamination free aquifers in the contamination affected areas; and undertaking the National Aquifer Mapping Programme in the XIIth plan including construction of tube wells for tapping arsenic safe deeper aquifer in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.

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